

Eden Phillpotts in Classical Vein

MR. EDEN PHILLPOTTS is a writer of such broad and deep resource that somebody said he was like the ocean, quite exhaustless in his quantity and returning with a new book just as regularly as the tides which wait for no man. It is interesting to note another detail of his resemblance to the mysterious ocean, out of which, as Mr. Kipling has remarked, "almost anything may come." The fact that Mr. Phillpotts has his own special and different currents which sometimes appear quite unexpectedly is not always borne in mind.

Every now and then during the past decade he has varied his work by changing his backgrounds from rural England to classical or imaginary scenes. The immutability of human nature is well emphasized in these tales, usually slighter in construction than the solid fabric of human life, which he draws with Hardy-like faithfulness and discernment. Indeed, he scarcely troubles himself to create personalities of an earlier age; such intensive effect of satire as he seeks in these comedies he attains simply by the whimsical expedient of setting modern figures among the fast vanishing gods of Thessaly.

A year or two ago Mr. Phillpotts, after turning out two or three fine, thoughtful and extremely workmanlike stories, as if absentmindedly and all within a few months, published a pseudo-classical tale called "Evander," in which a deeper saline than usual infused the current of his irony; it was a distinctly different stream from that deep, rolling sea of reflection upon humanity as the Lord made it which constitutes his regular reappearances. In this extremely salty story he ranged the few figures in his study of one of the modern aspects of feminism against an Arcadian background, with an effect so vivid and amusing that his book was roundly abused by those who saw nothing absurd in any eccentricity which lovely woman might find it her whim to follow. In that sparkling tale the daughter of a washerwoman, happily married to a woodcutter who worshiped Pan, felt moved to allow her higher nature opportunity by eloping with the son of a fisherman, the son being a disciple of Apollo and much given to lectures, long words and vague conversations touching the higher life. What happened when she discovered that Evander, the lecturer upon higher culture, had less of the human qualities which she found herself to require than she had taken for granted, and "was not that kind of man" made glad some reading for contemporary persons who do not prefer ethical lectures to detective stories, say, as daily food.

In his most recent adventure in this field, called "Pan and the Twins" (Macmillan), Mr. Phillpotts has once more pitched his puppet theater amid classical scenes, or at least in the Roman Campagna during the early years of the Christian era. Arcadius, a fifteen-year-old herd boy who has been beaten and sent adrift by his master, is a worshiper of the great god Pan, and to him Pan appears and tells him of his parentage, a subject wholly unknown to the lad. Pan informed him that his father was a Roman patrician, Marcus Pomponius, but his mother, Aurelia, was a daughter of the people, and thus not a suitable wife for him. She died in giving birth to Arcadius and a twin brother, Aurelia's mother, who hated Marcus, naturally saw to it that he never saw his children. Arcadius was sold to a plebeian and the other to a patrician. Pan endowed Arcadius with the gift of understanding the speech of all things of the hoof and pad and wing. He bids the boy go to the house of his father, Marcus Pomponius, and directs him on his way. He also tells him that in after years he will meet his twin brother.

It would be a graceless task to attempt to condense the story told in Mr. Phillpotts' brilliant satire into a few paragraphs. As in the earlier tale of "Evander," this accomplished writer has projected himself into the very spirit and scene of his quizzical romance of early Roman life, and his narrative has a charm of classical gravity lighted by the most brilliant flashes of contemporary reflection of antique didacticism in the mirror of modern thought. His pictures of scenery are as exquisite as his dialogues are irrepressibly convincing

and humorous in their intensely human quality. The book should have thousands of readers who will enjoy the sly humor of the author as he details the life of Marcus Pomponius, a rich patrician almost killed by the laborious kindness of his wife and his mother, neither of whom will give the poor man a chance to have any spontaneous life of his own initiative. What the presence of Arcadius brings into this menage, how he came to man's estate, married and finally met his twin brother and discovered that he had become a Christian monk, called Hilarion; how they discussed the great facts and simple moralities of life, assisted by Arcadius's ability to talk with a family of badgers in whose cave Hilarion had chosen to live; how Arcadius's own wife, Ceres, was a Christian and yet was content to let Arcadius continue to worship Pan, and how Hilarion also accepted the situation contentedly until he, a monk, vowed to celibacy, fell in love violently with a beautiful girl, Erotion, the cousin of Ceres. The inflexible dogmas of Christianity, even in those early times, clashed seriously with the broader pagan outlook with which Arcadius surveyed the world. Roman politics, too, complicates the situation, and the climax of irony is reached when a Christian Bishop ap-

peals to the Christian Emperor Constantine to deplore the lapse of Hilarion from the celibate order of the priesthood into the ranks of married mankind and to report the wish of the hierarchy that Arcadius should be executed because he persisted in his worship of Pan and consistently refused to be baptized. But Constantine pointed out how greatly useful both the twin brothers were, each in his own way—Hilarion with his spiritual fervor and Arcadius with his wealth, which he dispensed so generously to relieve distress among the poor.

Mr. Phillpotts' sentences flow like full rivers of thought, sometimes breaking over shallows of opposing argument in a thousand sparkling drops of merriment. No better English is written, no better balanced philosophy is expounded than in this book of serious argument adorned with so much of wit and wholesome ridicule. It is an admirable contribution to that intelligent discussion of the things which matter in the world's outlook, which now presses in all honest minds. W. S. M.

A late spring novel on Small, Maynard and Company's list is "A Vagrant Tune," by Bryan T. Holland, the grandson of Mrs. Gaskell, the author of "Cranford."

Books of the Week

Fiction.

HURRICANE WILLIAMS—By Gordon Young. Hurricane Williams, outlaw, renegade, pirate—on whose head a price is set—is the chief character in this story of the sea. Bobbs-Merrill Company.

THE QUEEN OF KARMANIA—By Marie Van Vorst. An American engineer is lured to Karmania. While there he uncovers a plot against the projected railroad and against the Queen. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.

THE ISLAND CURE—By Grace Blanchard. In which a young woman is "cured." Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

SHELLA OF BIG WRECK COVE—By James A. Cooper. A story of Cape Cod. George Gully & Co.

IN THE FAVOUR OF THE KING—By Hawthorne Daniel. A story around the expedition of Francisco Coronado out of Mexico to find the Seven Cities of Cibola of fabulous wealth. Doubleday, Page & Co.

BUNNY'S HOUSE—By E. M. Walker. Benziger Brothers.

"TIMBER"—By Harold Titus. Proclaimed by the publishers to be the first novel of conservation. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co.

THE CONQUEST—By Eva Emery Dye. The story of the Lewis and Clark expedition done into fiction. Doubleday, Page & Co.

A MAN OF PURPOSE—By Donald Richberg. Of a successful lawyer and politician of the Middle West. Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

THE OLD NEST—By Rupert Hughes. Story of an old couple dwelling alone in the home from which the children have flown. Harper & Brothers.

GENERAL BRAMBLE—By Andrew Maurois. The further adventures of Colonel Bramble, now ranking as General. Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE MAN ON THE OTHER SIDE—By Ada Barnett. The story of a woman who has enjoyed few opportunities for happiness in her early years and is enabled, through a change in fortune, to realize her life's dream. Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE MOON ROCK—By Arthur J. Rees. A mystery detective story. Dodd, Mead & Co.

THE WHITE KAMI—By Edward Alden Jewell. A South Sea story. Alfred A. Knopf.

THE RAYNER-SLADE AMALGAMATION—By J. S. Fletcher. A detective story. Alfred A. Knopf.

GOLDIE GREEN—By Samuel Merwin. The story of a girl, winsome and truly modern in many respects. Bobbs-Merrill Company.

MADAME VALCOUR'S LODGER—By Florence Olmstead. Story of love and business. Charles Scribner's Sons.

LILIA CHENOWORTH—By Lee Wilson Dodd. The scenes of this novel are laid in a woman's college in New England, in Italy and in Paris. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Nature Study.

MORE BEETLES—By J. Henri Fabre. Translated by Alexander Teixeira de Mattos. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Poetry and Drama.

THE NO PLAYS OF JAPAN—Translated by Arthur Waley. Contains translations of twenty Japanese plays. Alfred A. Knopf.

SHAKESPEARE TO SHERIDAN—By Alwin Thaler. "A book about the theater of yesterday and to-day." Cambridge. Harvard University Press.

THE GREAT RELIEVER—By George Frederick Gundelfinger. A play in four acts. Sewickley, Pa.: The New Fraternity.

SONGS OUT OF DOORS—By Henry Van Dyke. Poems on nature and life. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Juvenile.

SCOTT BURTON AND THE TIMBER THIEVES—By Edward G. Chorney.

Of a forester's adventures in Florida swamps. D. Appleton & Co.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE GARDEN—By Ruth O. Dyer. In which the little folks of the garden are introduced to little Jasper Nichols. Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company.

PEGGY PRETEND—By Millicent Evenson. The story of Peggy and of her many adventures. Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Company.

THE WILD HEART—By Emma Lindsay Squier. With an introduction by Gene Stratton-Porter. A book of animal stories. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation.

Biography.

THE LIFE OF ULYSSES S. GRANT—By Louis A. Coolidge. Centenary edition, with an introduction by Major-Gen. Harbord. Houghton-Mifflin Company.

SAINT-SAENS—By Arthur Hervey. An account of the composer's life and chapters on his compositions and literary works and his opinions on music and musicians. Dodd, Mead & Co.

LIFE OF SIR GUILFORD L. MOLESWORTH—Edited by E. J. Molesworth. London: E. & F. N. Spon, Ltd.

History and Public Affairs.

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES—By Wilbur Fiske Gordy. Intended as a school history for boys and girls. Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE FEDERAL SERVICE—By Lewis Mayers. A study of the system of personnel administration of the United States Government. D. Appleton & Co.

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF POLITICS—By Charles A. Beard. Why do States have various forms of government? What causes revolutions in States? What is the material with which the statesman must work? These questions we are told are answered by the book. Alfred A. Knopf.

Travel and Adventure.

IN THE HEART OF BANTULAND—By Dugald Campbell. A record of twenty-nine years pioneering in central Africa among the Bantu peoples, with a description of their habits, customs, secret societies and languages. J. B. Lippincott Company.

HOW TO SEE SWITZERLAND—By Frederick Dossenbach. A guide book. G. E. Stechert & Co.

Miscellaneous.

WEDDING CUSTOMS: THEN AND NOW—By Carl Holliday. Outlines the customs attending love, courtship and marriage from the earliest times. Boston: The Stratford Company.

THE HOME RADIO: HOW TO MAKE AND USE IT—By A. Hyatt Verrill. Harper & Brothers.

OPIATE ADDICTION: ITS HANDLING AND TREATMENT—By Edward Huntington Williams. The Macmillan Company.

THE COUNTRY LIFE BOOK OF BUILDING AND DECORATING—Edited by Reginald T. Townsend. Mr. Townsend is the editor of *Country Life*. Doubleday, Page & Co.

PROCESS ENGRAVING—By Edward S. Pilsworth. A history of the engraver's art and a survey of the processes employed to-day. The Macmillan Company.

EFFECTIVE TYPE-USE FOR ADVERTISING—By Benjamin Sherbow. Published by the author: New York city.

Religion.

THE REBIRTH OF EUROPE—By Martyn Summerbell. The subtitle describes this book as "A Study of the Middle Ages." Boston: The Stratford Company.

Astronomy.

THE NEW HEAVENS—By George Ellery Hale. Treats of the latest achievements in astronomy. Charles Scribner's Sons.

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